

## Article - Family Law

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§5-539.2.

(a) (1) A local government may establish a local citizens review panel to assist and advise the State Board and the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect.

(2) Two or more counties may establish a multicounty local citizens review panel, in accordance with a memorandum of understanding executed by the governing bodies of each participating county.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c)(2) of this section, the members and chair of a local citizens review panel shall be appointed by the local governing body.

(c) Membership on a local citizens review panel shall be representative of the local jurisdiction and include:

(1) individuals with expertise in the prevention and treatment of child abuse and neglect, such as child advocates, volunteers of the court-appointed special advocate program, attorneys who represent children, parent and consumer representatives, law enforcement representatives, and health, human, and educational services professionals; and

(2) one member from the local jurisdiction, who is appointed by the State Board and one who is appointed by the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect.

(d) (1) The term of a member is 4 years.

(2) At the end of a term, a member continues to serve until a successor is appointed and qualifies.

(e) A local panel shall:

(1) evaluate the extent to which State and local agencies in that jurisdiction are effectively fulfilling their responsibilities in accordance with the child protection standards and the State plan under 42 U.S.C. § 5106a(b) and any other criteria that the panel considers important for the protection of children;

(2) issue reports on its findings to the State Board and the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect; and

(3) carry out case reviews and other duties as requested to assist the State Board and the State Council on Child Abuse and Neglect.

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